[Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi.]

committee, fully respecting the wishes of the Government and fully expecting the same honourable behaviour from them, is it fair on the part of Government to inform the House the nature of the conversations which the Dewan had with the leaders of that political organisation ?

President: The State Congress members have rightly pointed out to me that while they were willing to observe the convention *viz*, that the matter should be regarded as confidential and not let into the press, they themselves have felt the difficulty of keeping it secret. The press is entitled to exert its influence in such matters and a little exaggeration may therefore be expected and certainly excused.

DENAND FOR GRANTS—(*contd.*)

DEMAND XI—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT—(*contd.*)

President: Order, order. The honourable members are no doubt aware that the time for discussion on the Public Works Demand is two hours and about an hour and ten minutes have elapsed and I found last evening that there was nobody to speak on this matter. And now I call upon Mr. Sesha Aiyar to speak. But if any honourable member desires to speak I don't want to stop him.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Sir, I wish to bring only one proposition for the consideration of the Public Works Department. Now, the way in which contracts for works are being given is by calling tenders. I unerstand that these P. W. D. Officers have got a number of satellites under them to whom they give these contracts. The works that are executed by them are found to be too shabby, I do not know what delicacy is there for the P. W. D. Officers to check these works. A few days ago when I had been to the Cape I had the misfortune to go to the Fruit-farm there and see the new reservoir constructed for watering the plants in the farm. The sanction for the construction of this reservoir was got from Government after repeated recommendations by the Director and the Agricultural Board.

President: Is there any water in the reservoir ?

Mr. M. K. Anathasiva Aiyar: There is some water which has been collected from the channels. When I enquired of the Inspector there, about the tank, he told me that a sum of Rs. 7000 was spent for the purpose of constructing retaining walls around this tank. When I went there I found walls but fallen down and I fear that in a few months, the whole tank will be filled up with earth. Such things could very well be avoided if local people were given the option of taking the contract even after

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calling tenders. If the local people who will be interested in the welfare of the locality are to be asked whether they would be prepared to take the work, the money spent on these public Works will be only well spent.

President: Is it the honourable member's point that contracts should be given to local men ?

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Yes, Sir, to local men as far as possible if they offer to carry out works below the tender rates. The people who are interested in the institution where works are to be carried out, should be given the contract for the lowest or the lesser amounts. With these words I support the demand.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail (*Nominated*): Sir, I wish to speak a word about the negligence of the departmental authorities in certain matters. If we travel along the roads in our country particularily along the main roads we will always find somewhere near a bridge a board stating that the bridge is 'under repair, or the 'road unsafe' or the speed limit should be five miles. We pass the bridge in the belief that when we return, say after a few days, the road will be alright. But months continue like this without any work being done. This is a matter which needs the urgent attention of the department.

Now I will say a word about another thing which also shows the utter negligence of the departmental authorities in regard to their duties. Sir, we have read in papers, an incident, that a huge banyan tree standing on the Quilon-Alleppey road fell on a house as a result of which three inmates of that house died and three or four were taken to the hospital. I am told that telegrams were despatched to the Dewan, to the Chief Secretary and to the Executive Engineer and such authorities. But till now nothing was done to see how many were injured or how many casualties occurred on account of that accident and the poor family which has lost three lives and 4 or 5 lying in the hospital has not been shown any consideration yet by the Government. The fact that the people of the locality or the owner of the house had sent petitions for the removal of this tree several months ago, is also to be taken notice of. A few days before the incident it was told, that the owner of that house informed the Division Officer, who was travelling that way; that the tree was in a dangerous condition and as such it ought to be removed. I am told by the gentleman that the Division Officer asked him to pay Rs. 50 if the tree was to be cut and removed.

President: I got the telegram on the same day and I ascertained the fact and I came to know that the tree was not so rotton as to fall down. Perhaps it might have been rotten inside.

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Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: Sir, petitions were sent to the Government and to the authorities, but if I am asked to prove the bonafide of the facts, it would be rather difficult for me because the gentlemen who wrote the petition told me that that the dangerous nature of the tree was brought to the notice of the Division Officer in person and on the spot five or six days before the accident. But the Division Officer told that man that the tree could be removed if he pays the expenses for it which may amount to Rs. 50.

President: Mr. Ismail, it is a very serious matter. I have called for the reports.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: Sir, it is very serious. To prove it is all the more difficult. Suppose I stop an officer of the department who travels on the way and, I inform him on the spot that the tree is dangerous and that it may fall down at any moment and the officer replies that if he is paid Rs. 50 he would look to that. If I am asked to prove the correctness of my statement I will be at a disadvantage as the officer concerned might say that nothing like what I said had happened. Therefore I request you, Sir, to make a thorough enquiry into the matter and do some help to the unfortunate family.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai (*Thovala* cum *Agasteeswaram*): Sir, I support the demand. In supporting it I would like to draw the pointed attention of Government to the extreme necessity of separating the Kodayar Irrigation Division. The question of a separate division for Kodayar Irrigation Project has been the subject of agitation for a very long time. Now, as it is, the whole project is placed under one Executive Engineer who has got other duties also to look to. Sir, considering the importance of the Kodayar Irrigation Project in South Travancore it is not possible for one Executive Engineer with his multifarious duties to concentrate his whole attention upon this irrigation project. Sir, it is a matter of gratification that the Government for the last few years have been turning their attention more seriously to the irrigation project in South Travancore. The recent drought commencing from 1110 onwards have conclusively proved that the South Travancore cannot depend on the Kodayar Project in future for the supply of water. And taking into consideration and admitting the failure of the Kodayar Project to supply water, Government have been pleased to restore tanks, and at the same time, have allotted a decent sum for carrying on investigations to find out another supplementary reservoir. It will take some time for the completion of the investigation. Meantime, it is an admitted fact that the existing system will not enable the ryots to carry on cultivation unless some supplementary works in the project are provided or, espicially, in the areas at the tail end of the Kodayar Project.

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Even during the ordinary seasons there is great scarcity of water in these areas. My point is that before this new supplemental reservoir or other works are taken up for execution some small schemes have to be worked out. And for that an officer who knows the locality and local conditions very well and expense in the working of the project should be appointed and he should draw up a scheme for reserving and conserving the water that is being drained away to waste during rainy season. For example, during the rainy season the water in the Pazhayar river runs to waste ; and by diverting that water conveniently by channels to other places it can be reserved and conserved for irrigation purposes. In the matter of opening of tanks also an experienced officer who knows the locality is highly necessary. The representative of Thovala will clamour for tanks to be openend there and the representative of Agasteeswaram taluk will clamour for tanks in that taluk. So, an experienced officer, who has ample experience of the working of the Kodayar Irrigation Project, is necessary at least to point out where these tanks are highly necessary. As is submitted every time, even during ordinary season, it is tail end areas that are suffering on account of the scarcity of water. Because of these the crops fail and we are not getting good yield since water is not available at the proper time. This is the case even during normal season and therefore my point is that, in the matter of opening new tanks or reparing old ones, preference must always be given to the areas in the tail-ends. For devising small schemes in order that the project may work succesfully it is highly necessary that an experienced officer should be appointed and that he must concentrate his whole attention upon this whole project alone. If he has got multifaricus other duties to be attended to, he could not devote his attention to this matter.

Now, Sir, two sub-divisions have been created under the Executive Engineer one at Nagercoil and the other at Thuckalai. Now my opinion is that this is rather more injurious than the previous arrangement. The officer at Thuckalai will be very keen on diverting the water to Kalkulam taluk and the Nagercoil man will be very keen in diverting water to Thovala and Agasteeswaram taluks. There is, thus likely to be conflict between the two Sub-division Officers. The Executive Engineer will be very busy with roads and other works. There is that difficulty. So, if one man has control of the whole project and if he is provided with a sufficient staff to workout a scheme and to find out in what all ways water could be conserved and distributed I think it will be conducive to the success of the project.

With regard to the Reservoir at the Fruit Farm mentioned by Mr. Ananthasiva Aiyar, a resolution was moved by me in the Agricultural Board, not for a reservoir, but for some source of water

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[Mr V S Arumukham Pillai.]

for the Fruit Farm. My suggestion at that time was not to construct a reservoir in the Fruit Farm itself, but to divert the channel which is running by the northern side of it into the Fruit Farm. Instead of that, at an enormous cost, a reservoir has been put up.

With these words I support the Demand.

Mr. M. Govindan: Sir, I support the demand. In doing so, I wish to call the attention of the Chief Engineer to one or two points. The first thing that strikes me is the need for fresh drinking water to the Coastal regions of Travancore. The coastal regions here are very important in several ways. Firstly, the chief industries are all located there. The cocoanut fibre industry is centered in the low-lying tracts of the coastal regions We do not get fresh water in these places for drinking purposes. The water that is ordinarily available is brackish. This is a matter that has been brought to the notice of the Government often. Some small amounts have been spent for it. The Government have been very keen on the question of fresh water supply to the urban areas. I am now thinking of the rural regions.

Mr. James Fletcher (*Kalkulam and Vilavankod* cum *Neyyattinkara*): May I know whether the honourable member is aware of the fact that Rs. 30,000 has been alloted this year for the Muttom water supply scheme?

Mr. M. Govindan: Sir, this amount is most inadequate. That is my answer to Mr. Fletcher's observation. For the coastal regions in the whole of Travancore, a sum of Rs. 30,000 would not serve any purpose at all.

President: This Rs. 30,000 is intended only for one village, viz., Muttom.

Mr. M. Govindan: What I submit is that, from some where near *Channankara* right up to Sherthala we have got coastal regions with low-lying level lands which, from the point of view of agriculture, is the most important part of Travancore. The health of the people in these areas is suffering on account of scarcity of good drinking water. This matter has been brought to the notice of the Government often and some experiments have been made here and there. I admit that. But my complaint is that sufficient importance should be attached to that matter and the department of P. W. D. ought to pay more attention and devote larger amounts for the purpose of trying to supply water particularly in the coastal regions where the scarcity is most keenly felt. First, a survey should be made of the coastal regions of the particular localities

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which need water and then a scheme might be devised in which the co-operation of the inhabitants of the locality may be sought for. Most of the well-to-do inhabitants may be asked to contribute for the success of the scheme. I undertook to contribute one half of the amount required for such a scheme in the taluk of Chirayinkil. Government had sent a P. W. D. officer to find out the estimate of the cost of the scheme. But it so happened that that officer was immediately called for some other work and it was not convenient for him to make the necessary recommendation. This is an illustration of what happened in one particular place. The whole question of water supply to these areas may be tackled together and something useful done in this direction. That is all that I have to say.

Mr. A. Easwara Pillai (*Kottarakara and Pathanapuram cum Shencottah*) : Sir, I wish to speak a word about the policy of the department in respect of ryots roads. There is a net work of roads in Central Travancore. This system of roads gives immense help to the rural population. The department does not give proper attention and care for the improvement of these roads. The people of this part of the country endeavour their utmost to construct roads. They have constructed several miles of roads and requested the Government and the P. W. D. to take up the maintenance work of these roads. But I am sorry to observe that the department does not come forward to render sufficient help in the matter of taking these roads and maintaining them. I earnestly request the Government to take this matter seriously and help the rural population who make considerable sacrifice in constructing these roads and help those persons who help themselves. With these words, I support the demand.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : Sir I oppose the demand and in doing so, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government one or two facts concerning the Public Works Department. Although there are a number of experts and qualified hands in the department sufficient attention is not being paid in sanctioning the execution of important works. For instance, the approval of the original design for the construction of the bridge over Periyar river at Alwaye. A design and estimate were prepared originally for the construction of this important bridge ignoring valid objections to the same most probably to help a particular contractor where part of the work as per that design was done and money spent it was found unworkable. Then another design was prepared and the work under that design is being executed. This involved a waste of money ; who is responsible for this wasted. This could have been avoided and much time saved if the departmental

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[Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar.]

experts had taken every precaution to sanction the suitable design for the bridge originally itself. This particular instance shows that sufficient attention is not being paid to such important matters involving a lost of money and time.

Sufficient attention and co-operation are also not forthcoming from some of the officers of this department. I shall quote an instance. Sir, there is a small thodu, nearly 10 ft. in width, that runs within 2 furlongs from the Perumbavoor Munsiff's court. The thodu is called Pooppani Thodu. There are a large number of public institutions such as schools. hospital etc, within a distance of 3 furlongs from this thodu. The cost that will be necessary to plant planks across the existing bridge over this thodu will come to Rs. 5. During the course of an interpellation, in this House about an year back it has been brought to the notice of the Government that a number of students that pass through this bridge daily ranges between 300 to 400 and the number of the public that pass through this bridge on market days exceeds 1000. It was represented to me by the public of the locality that the students who have to pass through this place find it very difficult to pass because of the unsafe nature of the bridge. This was brought to the notice of the responsible executive engineer by me early in makaram this year by means of a petition. A reply was forwarded to me to the effect that necessary orders have been sent to the responsible officers to carry out the work. Finding absolutely nothing done for 4 or 5 months, a reminder was sent to the executive Engineer. Since no reply was recieved an interpellation on the condition of the bridge, road, etc. was sent to the Government in time to be replied for this sessions of the council. When the interpellation reached the Government, finding the position difficult a letter was sent to me by the Chief Engineer to the effect that orders have been issued to plant planks over the bridge. That reply was received by me only some ten days back just before I started. Sir, for such a small but important work involving only a few rupees, the delay indifference and the negligence shown by the responsible officer is most deplorable. The thodu will be under water during the rainy season and the fact is known to the responsible officers of the Public Works Department who have visited the place. This indifferent attitude is rather very deplorable in view of the fact that a large number of school children have also to pass through this place daily. I request Government to take note of the irresponsible conduct on the part of the officers of the department.

One word about the duties of the committee constituted to advice the Public Works Department. The number of members in the Committee is limited. As a rule we find that a lot of committees have been appointed by the Government on very many occasions and a number of persons nominated by the Government

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to work on those committees. But it is a sad fact that nobody from North Travancore is represented in any of these committees. All the members either elected or nominated are persons either from Nanjanad or Kuttanad. It is as though there are not proper persons in North Travancore for representation. We too have a Kodanad in Kunnathunad Taluk and a Chathanad in Parur Taluk, if elections and nomination are to go only by Nads. I am not envious of the privileges and the rights enjoyed by Nanjanad or Kuttanad. I only want representation from northern taluks as well. The members elected and nominated as a rule will take particular interest in the affairs of the taluks that they represent, even though there are exceptions to it. It is not possible for them to urge on the attention of the Government the legitimate needs of the other taluks. I wish to bring to the notice of the Government that in all the committees before or now constituted or to be constituted persons from any of the Northern Taluks i. e. Parur Kunnathnad and Muvattupuzhai who can satisfactorily represents the said taluks may also be nominated by Government and their grievances also be considered and removed.

Mr. V. Sankara Menon (*Trivandrum and Nedumangad* cum *Chirayinkil*): Sir, in supporting the demand, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the comparatively neglected condition of the southern most part of the town, namely, the Manacaud Ward. That division forms one-fourth of the area of the whole town. It is thickly populated and even today we find there relics of the bye-lanes where a man cannot walk straight without one leg being placed before the other and even then his sides will be scratched by the *kayyalas* on either side. It is high time that the matter is given due attention and the improvements effected in those places.

There is an important Mohomedan mosque, in the southernmost part of the Kalippankulam road, and there is also one of the two cemetries that the town can boast of in the south eastern portion of this division. The road leading to the Kalippankulam mosque was in a very useless state for the last several months and it was prayed by the people there that if it was not possible to effect repair fully, at least the storing of gravel there must be stopped. Fortunately, some of the staff came recently and levelled the road.

The second point I wish to mention is the deplorable state of the road leading to the cemetery. Sir, this road is in so miserable a condition that many people have to wait till the morning if a death occurs in the night. It is impossible to walk with the dead body in the night to the cemetery. There are no lights and other convenience and it is highly necessary to make the necessary improvement in that portion of the town.

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Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: Sir, before continuing the explanation that I was giving yesterday, I have to say something by way of reply to the question relating to the accidents due the fall of a banyan tree over house and the consequent unfortunate loss of life. Sir, this road was very carefully surveyed, and all the avenue trees very carefully scrutinised, only just a few days before the visit of the Crown Representative, H. E. the Viceroy. I hope it will thus be clear to the House that the fall of this tree was purely an unfortunate accident.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: May I ask whether, any time before the accident, the department got information from the owner of the adjacent house that the tree was in a dangerous condition?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: I was going to say that. Immediately after the accident, a report was called for from the Division Officer. That report says that nobody ever informed any officer of the department about the threatening condition of the tree.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: Was that report submitted before or after the accident?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: Any report on the accident can be only after the accident.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: I am asking about the report that the department got no information whatsoever about the dangerous condition of the tree.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: The Division Officer was asked to report on certain representations to the effect that the tree fell on account of the neglect of the department.

Mr. K. M. Kesavan (*Karunagapally, Karthigapally and Ambalapuzha* cum *Shertallai*): Was it a dead tree or a living tree that fell?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: My information is that it was a living tree.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: Evidently, it was about to die.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: It was alive till it fell; it was dead after it fell. (Laughter)

President: Probably it was living outside, and dead inside. (renewed laughter.)

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: Sir, the honourable member Mr. Ananthasiva Aiyar referred to the system of giving out contracts on the tender system.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: May I ask the honourable member whether the question of the accident will be carefully scrutinised?

President: As a matter of fact, Government are doing it.

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Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: The system of giving contracts on tender system is now being strictly observed. Some years ago, probably due to the dearth of contractors, the tender system was not always adopted. Now, we invite tenders for every contract; in the case of bigger contracts, the notices inviting tenders are published in the leading newspapers, in the Government Gazette and also in the P W. D. offices; these notices are also sent to standing contractors. It is only in the case of small contracts that the tender notices are not published in newspapers.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar: May I ask whether designs also are called for from contractors?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: That is a different question. I may however inform the honourable member that in the case of complicated constructions, we some time invite designs also from reputed engineering firms.

In regard to the tender system, in recent years, we have been very strict in accepting the lowest tender, although our experience has been some what difficult in getting good or speedy work out of such contractors who quote very low rates.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: Is the department bound to accept the lowest tender always?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: That is an invariable rule, although there is some discretionary power in the officer; and Government also have the right of final decision. In many cases, the lowest tenderer, if sent for and asked whether he would guarantee to do the work well and within the time allotted, readily gives such guarantee; and in such cases especially, we have no other alternative but to accept the lowest tender. Of course, there are cases of departure from this rule, as in the case of urgent works which cannot wait for tenders, and in regard to which we cannot risk experimenting with contractors one after another.

With regard to the Fruit Farm Reservoir, unfortunately, a portion of the work got damaged; but certainly the loss involved cannot be considered to be so heavy as Rs. 7 or 8 thousands. We have estimated the loss at less than Rs. 400.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: May I know the cost of the work?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: About Rs. 5,000. I may however inform the honourable member that the loss is being recovered from the parties responsible.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Is not there a crack all round? I saw that.

President: What?

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: A crack.

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President : Where? (Laughter)

Mr. M K. Ananthasiva Aiyar.; In the Fruit Farm Reservoir.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar There is a crack ; but that is in the rubble lining, and not in the whole Reservoir.

Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar: Between the wall and the earth, there is crack all round ; the retaining wall has separated itself from the earth.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar : What the honourable member calls retaining wall, we call rivetment or pitching. That has slipped down into the bank. As I said, we are recouping the loss from the persons responsible.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai suggested that there was no need for this Reservoir, and that water should be let into the Fruit Farm from the Kodayar channel. I may inform the honourable member that this Reservoir is intended for storing Kodayar channel water. There is practically no spring in the Reservoir ; and the Kodayar channel has no water during some months of the year ; in fact, there is water only in some days of the week. The purpose of the Reservoir is to store water for supply on days when there is no water in the channel.

As regards the investigation of the Perumchani Reservoir, provision has been made in the budget, and the investigation will be started immediately. As regards the separation of the Irrigation Division, as honourable members are aware, before 1098, we did have two divisions in South Travancore, the Irrigation Division, and the Southern Division having jurisdiction also over Neyyattinkara, Nedumangad and some portions of Trivandrum. These places have been taken up by the Trivandrum Division Officer, so that Government considered that it was not necessary to have, in the south, over the same area, two Division Officers and four Sub-Division Officers. The Nagercoil Division Officer, during his tours, could very well inspect the channels also ; and during the same inspection, attend to other work also. Nagercoil is comparatively a small division, with an allotment smaller than that for the major divisions of Trivandrum, Quilon and Kottayam. It has been found from experience that the Nagercoil Division Officer can successfully manage the irrigation work along with roads and buildings.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : If the work in the Nagercoil division is comparatively light may I ask whether it would not be conducive to better irrigation facilities, if the regular P. W. work of the Nagercoil division is also added on to the work of the Trivandrum Division Officer, so that the Nagercoil Division Officer can concentrate upon and devote full attention to irrigation work in South Travancore?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar : Sir, it is not feasible for the Trivandrum Division to take up the task of being in charge of Nagercoil

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works. The work was found to be too heavy for one Sub-Division Officer ; we are therefore having two Sub-Division Officers there now. There is absolutely no conflict between them in the matter of distribution of water ; because it is the Division Officer that allocates the quantity of water for the two Sub-Divisions.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : What I asked was whether it was not possible to have a separate Division Officer—not a Sub Division Officer—for irrigation work, so that, if and when necessary, he may investigate small schemes for supplementing the regular water supply. An experienced officer is needed for that purpose. I was not asking about the working of the existing schemes.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar : Sir, even for investigation of small schemes, our Sub Division Officers would quite suffice. They can attend to the investigations and get orders and approval, if necessary, of the Division Officer. Now that there is the Irrigation Committee, I hope these problems will be satisfactorily solved.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : Where is the Irrigation Committee? Has it held any meeting during the last seven or eight months? Does it still exist?

President : This honourable House has to elect, tomorrow, two representatives for that Committee : it has not been fully formed yet.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : Sir, I was referring to the Irrigation Committee ; I am a member of that Committee. It is not working at all.

President : Who is the convener ?

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : The Division Officer for Nagercoil is the President ; and I think he has to convene the meetings.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar : Sir, in regard to the question of water supply to the coastal regions, I may inform the honourable member that, some years ago, in the two villages mentioned by the honourable member, we tried two deep tube wells. We could not get good water even after going 80 feet down. We did not want to risk further. We are now awaiting the purchase of the boring set which has been ordered for investigating the possibilities of getting good water in Kuttanad and other places.

Sir, complaint has been made about the inordinate and vexatious delay in the execution of works. I quoted yesterday the example of a tank in South Travancore, to indicate how some times delays are caused. In regard to that tank, when everything had

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[Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar]

been fixed up, when the officer actually went to the spot to start the work—we were under the impression that it was poramboke—our attention was drawn to the fact that the land belonged to a particular individual by virtue of a court decree. Of course, as an alternative to our acquiring the land from the gentleman, he was good enough to agree to our constructing a tunnel throughout the whole length of the land, provided we would cover up the tunnel so that he might continue to occupy the land. Our estimated cost of that work came to about five times the cost of the acquisition of that land plus the cost of cutting the channel. We then started proceedings for acquiring the land. Sir, this is how delays are caused.

Other instances of delay have also been mentioned by honourable members; much was said about the Alleppey-Changanacherry Canal in particular. Sir, that work was started in 1929 on the definite assurance by the people concerned that the land required would be surrendered free of compensation. At the starting point, the lands were Kandukrishi lands, so that we started the work without paying any compensation for the land, but with the hope that, in the succeeding portions the owners concerned would willingly surrender the land free of compensation Unfortunately, the moment we finished the Kandukrishi portion and reached the point where the land belonged to a private owner, we met with obstruction. We could not proceed with the work; it had to be stopped. Later on, representations were made for a combined canal and road, between Alleppey and Changanacherry. An estimate was prepared for about Rs. 12 lakhs, and administrative sanction obtained; Government have ordered that the work might be taken up and completed in the course of a series of years.

Mr. Thomas Chandy Mukkadan. ആലപ്പുഴ-ചങ്ങനാശേരി തോടിന്റെ കാര്യമാണ് മുതൽ ആലപ്പുഴവരെയുള്ള ഭാഗത്തിൽ എത്ര സ്ഥലം ഇനി വെട്ടിത്തീരുവാനുണ്ട്.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: I have no definite information, Sir. Unfortunately we have not been able to find money for this costly scheme; and Government consider that it is not worthwhile spending such a huge sum as Rs. 12 lakhs on a canal and road between Alleppey and Changanacherry. It is too ambitious a scheme, as ambitious as the one for a road between Alleppey and Kottayam, or a bridge across the Vembanad Lake from Thrinayankodam to Thanneermukhom.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla: May I ask whether a road between Thakazhi and Edathua, a distance of about 3½ miles, would be too costly and could not be undertaken, in view of the fact that it would solve the problem of a road between Alleppey and Kottayam, to a large extent?

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Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: I am coming to that. That will be a connecting link. It is, as is stated, only 3½ miles long.

Regarding the Alleppey-Changanacherry canal, the question has again been taken up and we are finding out means of cutting the canal in the uncut portions so as to utilise the work already done with a comparatively smaller sum.

Sir, another instance of delay was brought forward in the case of the triple bridge at Alleppey. There, Sir, we had to encounter engineering difficulties. We had to tackle the situation in a very difficult manner. Alleppey is a place almost floating on a loose subsoil. An estimate was prepared and provision was made to build piers on R.C. piles driven deep dea:h. But we found that these piles were going down freely under the fall of a block weighing 1½ tons. For every ten blows of the hammer the piles went down about 1½ inches, whereas the scheduled penetration was only one inch. This set us thinking as to what we should do. Driving them deeper may not be profitable as the deeper soil may be worse. So elaborate designs and studying of text-books on pile driving engineering had to be resorted to and we have now come to a satisfactory conclusion and the work will proceed hereafter.

The honourable member Mr. Kesavan represented about a village road in his constituency. I may mention that this road is only a village road having a grant of Rs. 10 per mile per year. We can more or less understand what we can do with this amount.

Mr. K. M. Kesavan: May I know what that grant is utlised for?

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar: Sir, it is supposed to be utilised for the maintenance of the road, but that road is a sandy one which requires little of maintenance for the surface. The overhangings on either side of the road are cut; any obstructions on the road are removed; falling trees are removed; depressions are filled. But in this particular case, I understand from the honourable member that about two miles of this road was gravelled during one or two years. This I think, is not a fault on the part of the department. I think they have done well. They have utilised the maintenance grant to some useful extent.

Regarding the soiling of clothes of the people walking along that road, that is a feature which is common to all gravelled roads.

Sir, something has been said about the A. V. M. canal. That canal was one of the portions of a big scheme of canal communication between Cape Comorin and Mangalore. This scheme is very

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[Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar]

many years old. A portion from Trivandrum to Tiruvallam was excavated at a cost of Rs. 2½ lakhs and that portion is now in useful order. To make the whole canal complete will be a very costly affair and it is estimated that not less than Rs. 10 lakhs will be required besides the cost of driving a tunnel on the Vizhingom side which may be prohibitive in cost. So it has been ordered by Government that this canal work may be postponed.

Regarding the honourable member Mr. Kuruvilla's scheme I have to congratulate him for the trouble he has taken in working out a scheme of arterial roads in Central Travancore. He lays stress on the construction of the Kozhencherry bridge and two other minor bridges. I may inform the honourable member that the question of constructing the Kozhencherry bridge has already been taken up, that proceedings have been started to acquire the land for the approaches on either side and the designs have been got ready. I believe that some work will be done on this bridge during next working season.

Sir, I believe the honourable member Mr. Kuruvilla will be of great help in the work of the new Advisory Road Committee whether he is in it or not, since he has taken some trouble in working out this scheme. I believe this committee will be able to advise the Public Works Department in the matter of the selection of the works and in the matter of expanding the communications for years to come and I hope that the constitution of the committee is a good augury and that we may have sufficient funds hereafter on account of the advent of new schemes of development such as the Pallivasal Hydro Electric Project and industrial resources of the country.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi : May I ask the Deputy Chief Engineer whether more serviceable and economical bridges of the Kamesom design could not be introduced in the land.

Mr. S. Sesha Aiyar : Yes, Sir, we are at it.

President : Before putting this motion to the vote, let me indicate what has been the underlying idea of the Government in announcing the formation of the committee which has been adverted to. It is the hope of the Government that that committee will be a really useful adjunct for the purpose of formulating a plan and implementing the programme in regard to communications both by land and by water. It has been found that according to the persuasiveness or the importunities attendant upon certain special circumstances, certain roads have been given precedence over certain

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other roads and certain items have received more immediate attention than others ; and, in order to avoid all possibility of accusations of bias, either territorial or personal, the idea has been that the work of formulating a programme for constructing and improving these communications should be conducted in full publicity and with the advice of those who represent the legislature and instructed and interested public opinion outside the legislature.

The ultimate idea of Government, as is well known, is that to the extent to which the Transport Department extends its scope of operations, the trunk roads will increasingly come within the range of work of that department and that the Transport Department out of its gross earnings should be able to contribute to keep up, to form and to maintain those roads on which the vehicles of that department operate. In other words, the idea is that the Transport Department is contemplated to yield—and experience has shown that it can yield—enough by way of gross profit to make it possible for that department to finance the making and the maintenance of the roads on which it operates. That will leavea certain amount of money available for the purpose of improving the canal system in the State, to which adequate attention has not been paid in the immediate past, and also for the purpose of improving village and non-urban and non-trunk communications. It is with reference especially to these communications that this committee's help is most sought for and will be most useful. The question of doing everything at the same time being ruled out as impracticable, this committee will very soon have to lay down a five year or a ten year programme at the end of which a certain number of indispensable communications will come into existence in good condition. And, in the formulation of that programme and in the carrying out, from year to year, of that programme without the possibility of any accusation of the bias which I have adverted to, the work of the committee will find both its justification and its complete operation.

Now, it is for that purpose that I told the honourable members elsewhere that further discussion on this Public Works Budget in so far as it is construction of road A or neglect of road B or the silting up of channel C may not come before the House so much and so poignantly if the committee operates, the committee having not only the right at its joint meetings to bring matters to the notice of the department but also otherwise, just as every honourable member of this House and every member of the public has a right to bring forward these special points before the department. It is in the hope that that committee will really serve not only the advisory but a directory function that it has been constituted.

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[President]

The question that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 58,88,962 under Demand XI—Public Works, including Water Works and Drainage was put and carried. The grant was made.

DEMAND XII—ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE.

Rs. 26,80,256.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon: (*Electrical Engineer*): Sir, I move for a grant of Rs. 26,80,256 under Demand XII—Electricity and Telephone.

Mr. James Fletcher: Sir, I support the Demand. However, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the need for reducing the cost of electricity to the consumer in Trivandrum, especially to the consumer for domestic purposes.

President: What is the rate now?

Mr. M. K. Nilakanta Aiyar: 5 annas per unit.

Mr. James Fletcher: Though it is said to be five annas per unit, if the amount is not paid in the month in which the Bill is presented, it has to be paid at 6 annas per unit. From the revenue account published in the Administration Report of the Department for the year 1113 it is seen that a sum of Rs. 47,620 is taken as interest. That is about 5 per cent on the investment. Then for depreciation the amount taken is Rs. 53,500 and to pension and provident fund the amount taken is Rs 7,100. Of course, there is liberal provision for these things. But then there is another item, namely, the net revenue carried over to electrical reserve is Rs. 52,510. That is a big amount taken to the reserve fund. Sir, that is probably with a view to support the future generation that such a big amount is set apart. My submission is that this sum is not absolutely necessary and so much need not be taken to the reserve fund.

President: Mr. K. P. P. Menon, what is the reserve fund meant for?

Mr. K. P Padmanabha Menon: That is to provide against such contingencies as the breakdown of plants not covered by depreciation or any abnormal increase in the cost of oil.

Mr. James Fletcher: So far as the breakdown of the machinery is concerned, my submission is that the machines are all very costly and there will be no sudden breakdown so far as they are concerned and that the amount taken for the depreciation fund every year will be ample for the renovation of the machines.

In Calcutta the rate for domestic purposes is 2 annas per unit. In Madras they propose to bring the rate to the level in Calcutta.

President: At present the rate in Madras is 4 annas is it not?

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